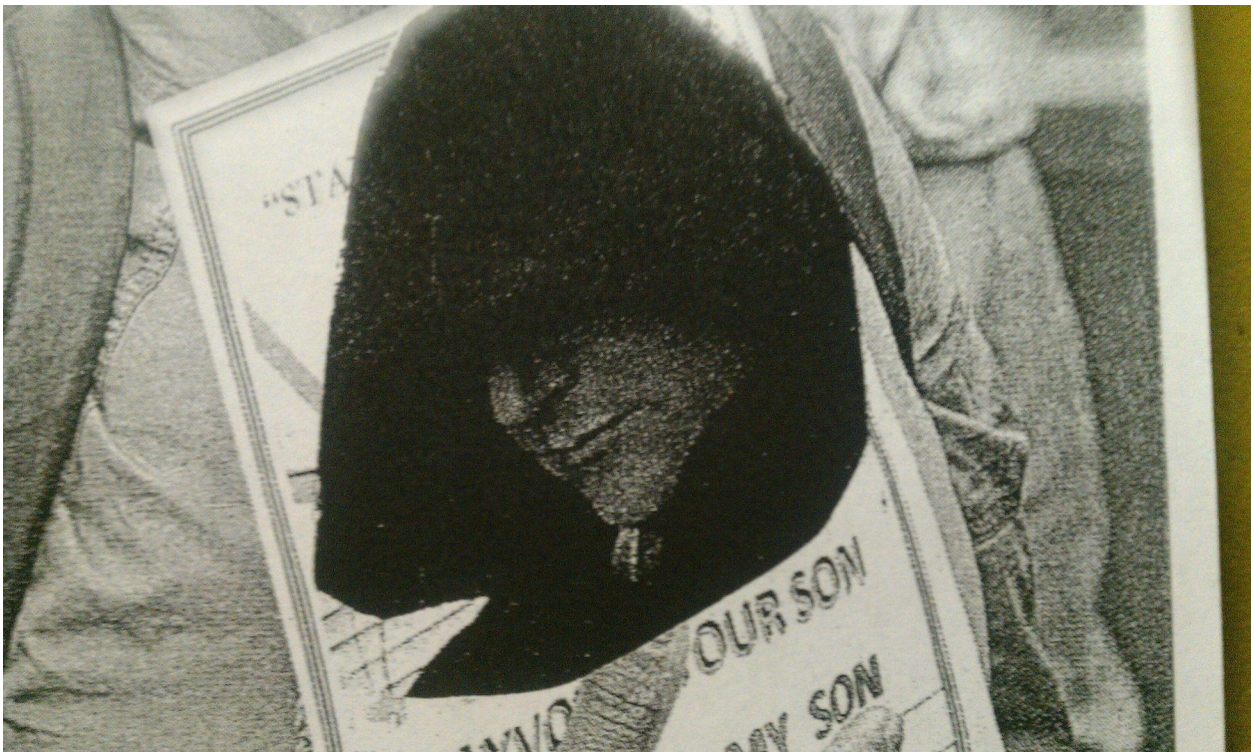
Patrol Unit:

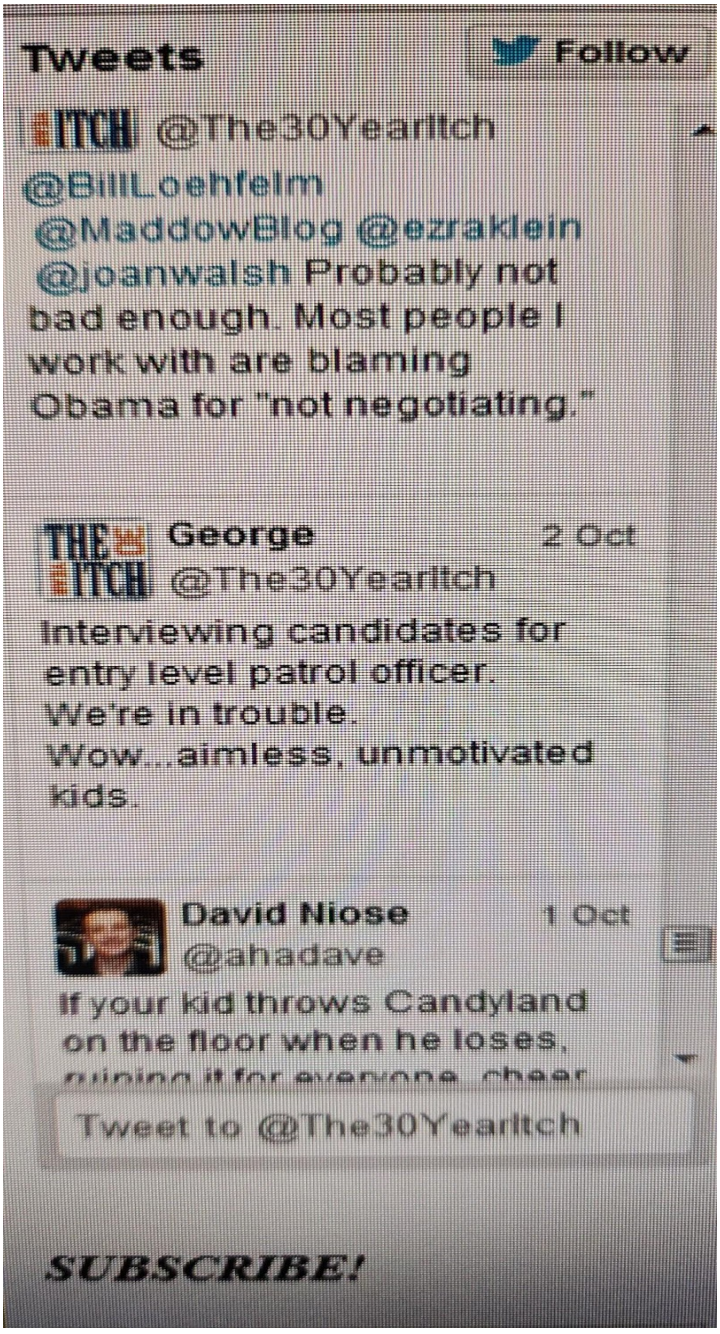
Over the past several months, many patrol officers have come to me with issues concerning the path the department is on with the current leadership. Persistent, chronic shortfalls are becoming more severe, are never acknowledged, and much less addressed.

Morale has been suffering for some time at RRPD. In my 16 years as a union labor representative, never have I heard more calls for change and acknowledgment of the abject failures of our leadership. There have always been complaints about George Lichman’s condescending demeanor and proclivity to argue, but his impact was relegated to the few people surrounding him. Since becoming Chief, his impact on the larger department as a whole has detrimentally affected the ability of the police department to accomplish its mission. Despite the enormous opportunities provided by a new facility and the addition of youth and enthusiasm at the department, it continues to sink to new lows. Some members feel we have crossed the line to a hostile work environment. Others question the safety of the work environment due to staffing, equipping, and vetting of our training. There is strong interest in taking a vote of no confidence in the leadership at RRPD under Chief George Lichman.



George Lichman's social media posts have always been a point of consternation for fellow Rocky River police officers. His activity usually revolved around contentious and inflammatory news stories e.g. the death of Trayvon Martin and the trial of

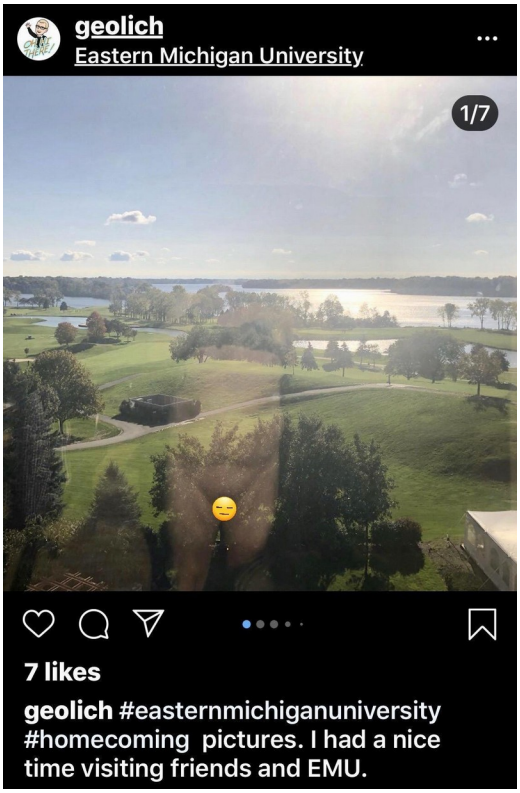
George Zimmerman. See above picture that was posted on the police bulletin board, mocking his participation in a racially motivated protest in support of Trayvon Martin. His opinions were far outside of the majority opinions of the officers and were touted in a condescending, matter-of-fact tone that often elicited arguments. He would often goad officers into debates which often resulted in conflict. Over the years he had become increasingly vocal in person and on social media. When he first became a supervisor, he caused friction on the shift with his outspokenness. Roll call conversations would be peppered with barbed criticisms of conservative politics or religion, in particular the Catholic Church, at one point requiring the intervention of HR after a shift mate walked off the job. Lichman authored a blog that also included his Twitter feed. It was known throughout the city and with police and court employees that he operated this blog. Several years ago then-Sgt Lichman authored insensitive and unprofessional Twitter posts disparaging soon-to-be-hired Rocky River police officers as "aimless, unmotivated kids."



He also alluded to his porn habits in a post on Twitter.

And "cybering"

Chief Lichman more recently posted a selfie in the nude on Instagram [emoji added for decency]. This was widely distributed throughout the department.



George Lichman has always been vocal about causes he personally believes in. Rarely did the fact that he was at work, in police uniform, and in a management position stop him from inappropriately expressing his opinions and beliefs, nor did the likelihood of offending others. More specifically, George Lichman's political activism while in uniform in support of BLM, a controversial political movement, has had devastating effects on department morale, motivation, retention and recruitment. This inflammatory group he was supporting is outspoken with anti-police rhetoric and is widely considered offensive to and firmly against the law enforcement profession.

Although Chief Lichman openly admits to not caring about morale, saying “I should probably care more about morale than I do,” he recklessly and knowingly has caused harm to patrol morale and motivation by making such statements and gestures. He is poking a finger in the eye of officers everywhere by disregarding accepted norms in police culture and professional work environments everywhere– not to mention flagrantly violating RRPD Policy 1028 [attached]. If you haven't looked at the policy in a while, you will be surprised to see how severely the policy was violated and the implications on the department. It's a no-brainer.

His conduct has negatively impacted the morale and motivation of current officers and hurt the prospects of recruiting new officers. Let it be known, word has gotten out, and these actions have decimated our ability to hire. The aftereffects of these public displays are only starting to be visible, as we have been unable to hire in

over a year. Prospective police officers openly avoid applying to the Rocky River Police Department.

of other organizations. Examples of the type of information that could reasonably be expected to compromise safety include:

- Disclosing a photograph and name or address of an officer who is working undercover.
- Disclosing the address of a fellow officer.
- Otherwise disclosing where another officer can be located off-duty.

1028.4 PROHIBITED SPEECH, EXPRESSION AND CONDUCT

To meet the department's safety, performance and public-trust needs, the following are prohibited unless the speech is otherwise protected (for example, an employee speaking as a private citizen, including acting as an authorized member of a recognized bargaining unit or officer associations, on a matter of public concern):

(a) Speech or expression made pursuant to an official duty that tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Rocky River Police Department or its employees.

(b) Speech or expression that, while not made pursuant to an official duty, is significantly linked to, or related to, the Rocky River Police Department and tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Rocky River Police Department or its employees. Examples may include:

1. Statements that indicate disregard for the law of the state or U.S. Constitution.
2. Expression that demonstrates support for criminal activity.
3. Participating in sexually explicit photographs or videos for compensation or distribution.

(c) Speech or expression that could reasonably be foreseen as having a negative impact on the credibility of the employee as a witness. For example, posting statements or expressions to a website that glorify or endorse dishonesty, unlawful discrimination or illegal behavior.

(d) Speech or expression of any form that could reasonably be foreseen as having a negative impact on the safety of the employees of the Department. For example, a statement on a blog that provides specific details as to how and when prisoner transportations are made could reasonably be foreseen as potentially jeopardizing employees by informing criminals of details that could facilitate an escape or attempted escape.

(e) Speech or expression that is contrary to the canons of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics as adopted by the Rocky River Police Department.

(f) Use or disclosure, through whatever means, of any information, photograph, video or other recording obtained or accessible as a result of employment with the Department for financial or personal gain, data classified as confidential by state or federal law

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or any disclosure of such materials without the express authorization of the Chief of Police or the Executive Staff Assistant.

(g) Posting, transmitting or disseminating any photographs, video or audio recordings, likenesses or images of department logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked vehicles, equipment or other material that specifically identifies the Rocky River Police Department on any personal or social networking or other website or web page that tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Rocky River Police Department or its employees.

Employees must take reasonable and prompt action to remove any content, including content posted by others, that is in violation of this policy from any web page or website maintained by the employee (e.g., social or personal website).

1028.4.1 UNAUTHORIZED ENDORSEMENTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

While employees are not restricted from engaging in the following activities as private citizens or as authorized members of a recognized bargaining unit or officer associations, employees may not represent the Rocky River Police Department or identify themselves in any way that could be reasonably perceived as representing the Rocky River Police Department in order to do any of the following, unless specifically authorized by the Chief of Police:

(a) Endorse, support, oppose or contradict any political campaign or initiative.

(b) Endorse, support, oppose or contradict any social issue, cause or religion.

(c) Endorse, support, or oppose any product, service, company or other commercial entity.

(d) Appear in any commercial, social or nonprofit publication or any motion picture, film, video, public broadcast or any website.

Additionally, when it can reasonably be construed that an employee acting in his/her individual capacity or through an outside group or organization (e.g. bargaining group), is affiliated with this department, the employee shall give a specific disclaiming statement that any such speech or expression is not representative of the Rocky River Police Department.

Employees retain their right to vote as they choose, to support candidates of their choice and to express their opinions as private citizens, including as authorized members of a recognized bargaining unit or officer associations, on political subjects and candidates at all times while off-duty. However, employees may not use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election or a nomination for office. Employees are also prohibited from directly or indirectly using their official authority to coerce, command or advise another employee to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes (5 USC § 1502).

1028.5 PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees are restricted in partisan political activity based on the following (ORC § 124.57):

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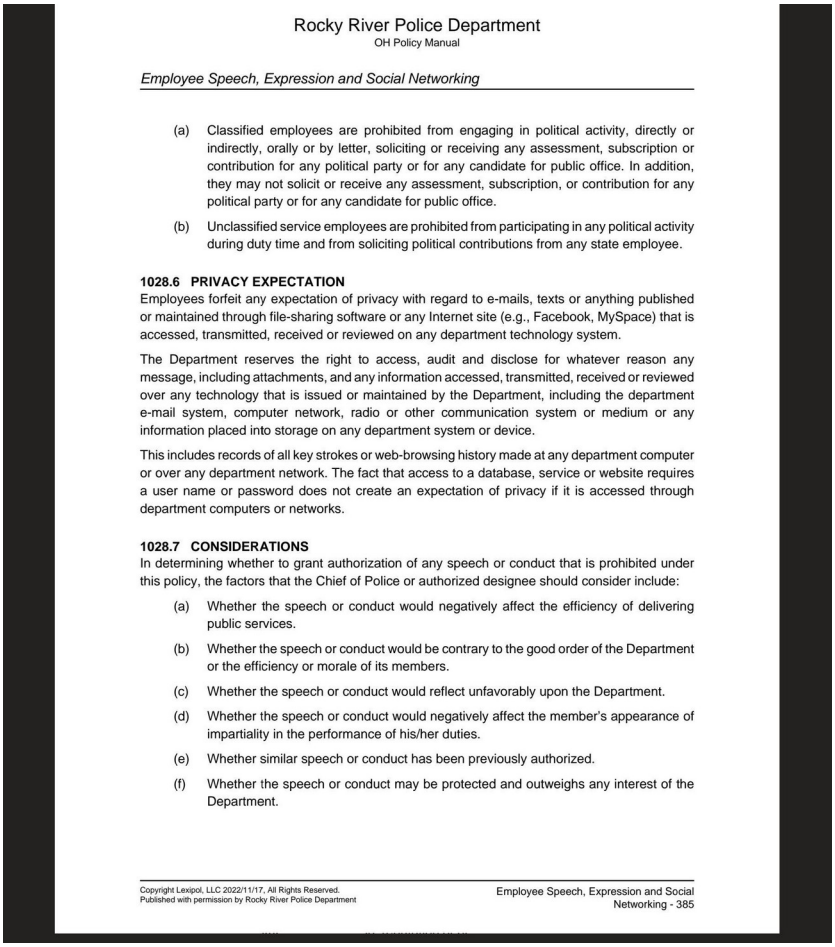

Rocky River Police Department
OH Policy Manual

Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking

(a) Classified employees are prohibited from engaging in political activity, directly or indirectly, orally or by letter, soliciting or receiving any assessment, subscription or contribution for any political party or for any candidate for public office. In addition, they may not solicit or receive any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political party or for any candidate for public office.

(b) Unclassified service employees are prohibited from participating in any political activity during duty time and from soliciting political contributions from any state employee.

1028.6 PRIVACY EXPECTATION

Employees forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to e-mails, texts or anything published or maintained through file-sharing software or any Internet site (e.g., Facebook, MySpace) that is accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any department technology system.

The Department reserves the right to access, audit and disclose for whatever reason any message, including attachments, and any information accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed over any technology that is issued or maintained by the Department, including the department e-mail system, computer network, radio or other communication system or medium or any information placed into storage on any department system or device.

This includes records of all key strokes or web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network. The fact that access to a database, service or website requires a user name or password does not create an expectation of privacy if it is accessed through department computers or networks.

1028.7 CONSIDERATIONS

In determining whether to grant authorization of any speech or conduct that is prohibited under this policy, the factors that the Chief of Police or authorized designee should consider include:

(a) Whether the speech or conduct would negatively affect the efficiency of delivering public services.

(b) Whether the speech or conduct would be contrary to the good order of the Department or the efficiency or morale of its members.

(c) Whether the speech or conduct would reflect unfavorably upon the Department.

(d) Whether the speech or conduct would negatively affect the member's appearance of impartiality in the performance of his/her duties.

(e) Whether similar speech or conduct has been previously authorized.

(f) Whether the speech or conduct may be protected and outweighs any interest of the Department.

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The Chief's message on the police department website states that "we are proud to serve the Rocky River community using proactive crime prevention strategies, strong community/police partnerships, community input, and constant transparency."

Despite claims of using community/police partnerships, community input, and constant transparency, the Chief subverts efforts to gain accurate and direct feedback from residents, visitors, and commuters by restricting online surveys. Furthermore, this falls well short of policy requirements in our community policing policy which requires annual community surveys to take place. There is no partnership, and RRPD does not want input from the community.

Transparency in modern police doctrine is widely considered best practice. As such, it is included as a main objective in the message from the Chief on the police department website. Transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability. Transparency is practiced in companies, organizations, administrations, and communities. The rank and file does not experience openness from our administration. Communication is oftentimes nonexistent. Accountability never existed. Union membership does not feel our police department, under the

leadership of Chief George Lichman and his appointees, has been living up to its own pledge of "constant transparency."

We find it impossible to uphold a mission statement of supporting respectful, professional and dependable police services without embodying those characteristics within our own four walls.

For those unaware, the mission statement is as follows:

The mission of the Rocky River Police Department is to prevent crime, enforce the law, and support quality public safety by delivering respectful, professional and dependable police services.
Preventing crime includes everything from strengthening neighborhoods and families to using crime data to identify patterns and suspects.
Enforcing the law includes not just the measures of arrest and warnings but also educating the public about their responsibilities.
Supporting quality public service means being a full partner with other parts of the criminal justice system and assisting witnesses and crime victims throughout the process.
Delivering respectful police services means treating people the way you want to be treated. Professionalism is our hallmark and it means knowledgeable, competent, and ethical policing. Dependable means that we keep our promises and serve with courage and dedication.

This is a list compiled from the concerns of union membership in the patrol unit:

There is a lack of oversight and supervision in critical areas of the dept. Even with robust support, any efforts to specialize are futile when the foundation is weak. At RRPD, critical resources are invested in pet projects that benefit individuals more than the police department at large. Pet projects and personal interests take precedence over working together. Dissension and resentment are present where cohesion and efficiency are needed. This dissension has infected the department at large.

RRPD went from a dispatch section of 8+ plus to one dispatcher. The outfitting and maintenance of our dispatch center is an afterthought, if a thought at all. Phones regularly go down. Residents calling the police and getting a busy signal?? Was there any vetting of our supplier? Did we fully evaluate the opportunity to outsource or did we shy away for political reasons?

Chief Lichman likes to use the term “progressive.” But we cannot grow beards, cannot have visible tattoos, cannot wear drop holsters, MOLLE vests are frowned upon, and we do not laterally hire–does RRPD really know best? Are we a department that’s held in high regard with other area departments? They complain

officers aren’t proactive or aggressive enough but, at the same time, say we’re going to send them to anger management courses because we fear they are too aggressive. Leadership thinks they can browbeat and disparage officers into writing more tickets and yet they permit incessant Monday morning quarterbacking to occur outside the chain of authority. This hampers officer initiative. We also permit back-channeling which undermines good order and discipline by short-circuiting supervision. Progressive, or are things regressive at RRPD? Motivation is a direct reflection of the leadership.

In the face of well-anticipated retirements, the administration has shown an inability to manage the retention, recruitment and hiring of officers. There is no sense of urgency with hiring from current eligibility lists. Why is FPPD receiving 34 applicants and RRPD only 7? RRPD leadership has sandbagged efforts to introduce lateral hiring. With surplus funds from federal COVID dollars, they made no extra hiring efforts to account for scheduled retirements or to bolster the ranks in the event of an exigency. We seem unable to hire officers, but what happens when those we do have start to leave? How can an agency so desperate to hire continue with its current style of leadership if morale continues to decline? Our staffing levels are so critical one must ask how it affects the ability to properly manage the department. Do we have the ability to discipline and potentially suspend an officer when we have no wiggle room with manpower at its current level? What are the implications on our accountability to the public? Is there any real leverage over probationary officers in such a desperate department? We have not been able to replace officers for over a year, when the preceding retirements were scheduled years prior. This is incompetence at best, negligence at worst in the responsibility to recruit and hire members of the police department.

Patrol is a clear afterthought in RRPD leadership's eyes. There is limited effort put forth to maintain sufficient patrol cars. The facilities patrol officers use daily are neglected. There is no effort to respect the seniority and dignity of veteran officers' schedules. Officers are kept from their seniority shift selections and unit cohesion is disrupted with random shift "shake ups." Leadership thinks veteran officers, that are forced to the night shift despite seniority for day shift, will somehow be magically motivated and enthusiastic to make up for the shortfalls of department leadership. RRPD seems to have a knee-jerk willingness to offer employees to the school district, despite patrol being chronically understaffed. Why does a police department with 18 patrol officers need 4 SROs? Furthermore, we utilize these patrol shifts as permanent crossing guards. We also act as EMTs (despite not having regularly updated CPR) because it's deemed "best practice." During COVID, we never weighed our duties against the need to safeguard our officers' health. We recklessly kept doing as we've always done, e.g. going to all EMS calls and performing vehicle lockouts. There is clear animosity in Chief Lichman's approach to patrol. He doesn't even try to hide it when he mentions patrol in conversations. Effort is made to look the part to the community, without meaningful follow through.

Officers are frustrated that we have no presence on WEB SWAT and have acted with no urgency to change that. Despite our mission statement pledging to be "full partner" within the criminal justice system, we have not participated on any level in regional special response assets. This is unheard of in the history of our department, especially considering the amount of youth in the ranks we've accumulated over the past decade or more. This has greatly affected our reputation amongst other agencies.

The administration doesn't encourage and promote participation in specialized units. These units are under utilized and could provide unique recruitment opportunities. The administration ignores professional proposals and advice from specialized units to help manage said units. The Marine Patrol is a prime example of this.

The reputation of our police department has fallen as a direct result of Chief Lichman's leadership.

A chosen few can come to work late and leave early with no accounting for their time reflected in Precinct Manager. The Chief is regularly seen taking his children to school in his city vehicle on city time. The ESA has regularly been seen operating his city vehicles in a reckless manner.

We have an ESA that says (and appears to live by the philosophy) to get promoted so you don't have to do anything. As OIC of the detectives, cases are not being assigned to detectives in a timely manner, many times several months after the initial report. This has comprised investigations, as some electronic evidence is time-sensitive. Patrol is frequently assigned follow up duties of detectives. When working shift OIC coverage, he has failed to enter into LEADS time-sensitive stolen vehicles and warrants. He also goes unaccounted for, unable to be reached via police radio or cell phone when called, only to later reply, "[certain ranks] don't have to answer the radio." When Chief Lichman was presented with this information by the witness, he laughed it off.

The Chief regularly fails to respond to emails from officers despite requiring response to his own emails. When an officer emails the Chief, it is usually an important or time sensitive matter. It is unprofessional and disrespectful to ignore the needs of officers. Yet officers are required to respond to each random, non-essential email from the Chief. He does not follow up with sensitive matters that are important to officers.

Chief Lichman's indifference was on full display in the aftermath of an officer involved shooting. His perceived lack of concern for officer wellness was unfortunate. Under his leadership, the department would not purchase personal first

aid "blow out" kits for patrol officers, despite two recent OIS's where they used their own med kits.

Certain personnel assignments have reportedly created a barrier to learning, motivation and morale. The Chief refuses to listen to feedback. Do we seek established, vetted training from recognized experts or do we choose based on convenience, price, or a conflict of interest with side businesses? If asked, how would the department explain giving junked vehicles to an employee's side business? Who paid for the tow?

Disparate overtime opportunities within the department. Some officers are offered to work for half OT/half CTO while others have unlimited and unsupervised overtime access. Some members are granted discretion to flex their hours, allowing unrivaled access to side work and copious overtime opportunities.

Condition of our brand-new building is laughable and a continual source of frustration and dismay of officers. Say what you want about the design of the employee parking lot, but it's still unfinished after over two years. There is a documented history of criminal damage/vandalism and attempted aggravated vehicular assault in the police parking lot. Numerous officers have been approached by the public as they are entering and exiting their personal vehicles. What was designed as a safe and secure parking lot has become an especially vulnerable place that compromises the safety and security of our employees and their vehicles–everyone knows where the police officers park. How is the PD not embarrassed by the current state with the broken gates with traffic cones and the incomplete security gate? Absolutely no attention has been paid to the parking area. Over two years with a new jail but we have been unable to hire support staff to operate the jail.The PD seems intent on opening the jail regardless. How could anyone expect patrol in its current state to handle jail operations as well? The jail itself was refused occupancy permit due to a construction problem. But the relationship between the builder/GC and the city was reported to have fractured. A hasty alteration was made by city workers. Problems persist years after construction. Exterior doors don't close or lock after repeated attempts at repair. The range? Weight room was self-funded. Garage doors are faulty. After the furnishing of personal office space, progress at the department slowed to a crawl and has yet to be completed. Random tables of junk persist years after occupying the new building. There are an inadequate number of computers in the report writing room. For the longest time there was one single computer for officers’ report writing. The dispatch center is a hodge-podge of leftover equipment, unmounted and installed on the floor. These issues cannot be disregarded as a few tweaks in a newly constructed facility. It represents negligence and lack of follow through on what should have been a rare opportunity to professionalize the police department. The condition and serviceability of our vehicle fleet is a unanimous and continuous gripe of patrol. There is no accountability in the management of the vehicle fleet. In

the face of chronic problems that brought the number of serviceable patrol cars dangerously low, patrol was tasked with overly burdensome and redundant notifications to further shirk responsibility and shift blame.

With huge savings in personnel expenditures year over year ($1.5 million 2022 alone), wouldn't it be prudent to invest those saved dollars into much-needed vehicles? Why are we allowing the PD to utilize only POPAS funds for the purchase of vehicles?

Place the blame where you may, but the ultimate responsibility to be an advocate for, and to effectively manage the police department rests squarely on the shoulders of our Chief of Police. By nature of the position he is responsible for anything and everything that occurs at RRPD; moreover, our work environment is the actual physical manifestation of his choices. Rocky River is not a fast-paced, high crime city where management has to deal with real challenges that face larger, busier departments. Most of the drama is self-created, academic in nature. Certainly RRPD would be more buttoned up if Chief Lichman dedicated time and effort in the appropriate places.

Do you have confidence in the leadership of Chief George Lichman and his appointees at the department? Has he demonstrated the necessary skills, judgment and character to lead this department? Is there ever substance behind initiatives we undertake, or is it fluff to post on Facebook that goes nowhere? Are we going in the right direction? What happens when the other shoe drops? Do you think morale is set to improve?

Chief Lichman himself articulated the department's confidence in him when he assessed the parking ticket "issue" on night shift, saying it's a big "fuck you to me." His animosity towards patrol is clearly reflected in his management style and choices. Though chronically understaffed, he permits the responsibilities of others to be dumped in the laps of the patrol shifts. This animosity is also reflected in patrol's heavily scrutinized access to overtime.

Management often laments about what they perceive as a generational gap in the workforce. Perhaps what really brings out their ire is the mandate for change. The youth have higher expectations for their workplace, and maybe they should. They have their choice of places to work. If the older generation had pressed harder maybe Rocky River would be more of the progressive place it pretends to be.

We all know the level of confidence our supervisors has in Chief Lichman. Regular criticisms are as reliable as the sun coming up. Whether they have the gumption to act remains to be seen.

This is not the first time our department has held such a vote. George Lichman, acting as a union representative, held a written survey in judgement of former Chief Wagner. This grassroots effort started informally in conversations between coworkers. These conversations have become increasingly frequent and urgent. We've seen these types of votes occurring with more frequency, both locally and across the country. These unprecedented times in our profession call for unprecedented transparency. Thankfully we do not have issues in our patrol ranks that plague other larger departments, but you can only imagine how much worse things would be if we did–or if we were faced with one of those headline-grabbing incidents that would give the administration an opportunity to turn on their own members. Is it transparency for thee but not for me, or is it a two-way street?

Obviously quite a list, but unfortunately it is not all inclusive. It is the lion's share of the concerns of the patrol division. We tried to include every single point of contention, but we may have missed a few. These are personal accounts of the members of our unit. You judge its validity based on your own experiences and weigh its significance against your own sensibilities. While some of you may not agree with every point, it is important to represent everyone's opinion and give each member a chance to be heard–especially when the overarching sentiment is unanimous. It is important to remember that our weaknesses have a detrimental impact outside of the police world, risking the community we swore to serve and who deserves better.

So many of you wanted to take this vote. Here it is. This is your opportunity to voice your honest opinion… and do so anonymously. The survey will be completely discreet. I've included a screenshot of the privacy statement from Monkey Survey. The settings for this survey are set to anonymous. Only the recipient can vote. We will not know who voted and what they voted. In addition to your anonymity, your participation is protected by federal law, and our own department policy as protected union activity.

This email communication is meant for patrol unit only. If it gets out, know that one of our own members is to blame.

“When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.” Edmund Burke: "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents" 1770

Stuart Loh
2 min read

SurveyMonkey has collected literally hundreds of millions of responses to surveys. People who fill out SurveyMonkey surveys often ask us whether their survey responses are truly anonymous and safe from prying eyes. After all, sometimes respondents are only comfortable with providing honest feedback if they know that their responses can't be traced back to them!

***Related:** How we protect your data and 3 steps you can take to keep it safe*

The first thing to know is that surveys are set up by a survey creator and not by SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey provides the tools for creators to configure their surveys how they want. This includes allowing them to collect strictly anonymous responses, or to choose to identify their respondents.

If survey creators want to identify respondents, they could of course just ask who you are (e.g. ask you for your name and contact information using a demographic survey question type). We also offer the option for surveys to collect respondent IP addresses. While an IP address will not necessarily disclose your identity, IP addresses are often indicative of a geographic location.

How do you know if your IP address or email address is being collected "in the background"? The best thing to do is contact the survey creator, or the person who invited you to take the survey, directly!

Oh, and SurveyMonkey never peeks at your responses unless the survey creator gives us permission to. We give